

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Barrow

Magical Mozart programme notes

A buzz of excitement – then swirling energy and joy. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra brings the magic of Mozart to life with an iconic piece from *The Marriage of Figaro*, before the Orchestra's very own Cormac Henry takes on the composer's irresistible *Flute Concerto No.1*. Then, we jump forward through time (sort of) to hear Stravinsky's wonderfully inventive *Pulcinella Suite*, written in the 1920s but reimagining music of the much more distant past.

Kristian Sallinen *conductor*

Finnish conductor and violist [Kristian Sallinen](#) is an exceptional young talent who exhibits a natural authority and charismatic flair on the podium. He has already worked with many of the leading Finnish orchestras and is rapidly gaining international recognition.

Sallinen's musical studies started age five on the violin and in 2013, aged 12, he switched to viola. He studied conducting with Finnish composer and conductor Jorma Palula, and with Sakari Oramu at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, and has been mentored by Paavo Järvi, Esa-Pekka Salonen and Hannu Lintu.

From Mozart and Beethoven to Dvořák, Sibelius, Britten and Bacewicz, Sallinen's repertoire also features a strong interest in contemporary music. Recent engagements have included performances with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Helsinki Philharmonic and Sinfonia Lahti, debuts with the Trondheim Symphony, Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden, the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra and Portugal's Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Musica. His growing international profile has also extended to first-time collaborations with Luxembourg Philharmonic, Brussels Philharmonic and Iceland Symphony orchestras, as well as returns to the UK for debut appearances with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Royal Northern Sinfonia.

A national prize-winner and member of the [Seele String Quartet](#), as a player he has performed at festivals across Europe and has appeared as a soloist with orchestras too.

Cormac Henry *flute*

[Cormac Henry](#) has been principal flute of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra since joining the ensemble in 2002. A native of County Kerry, he began playing the flute aged seven and his studies took him from Kerry School of Music to Dublin, then later to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Averil Williams, and finally to Stuttgart where he studied with Jean Claude Gerard.

As a soloist, Henry has appeared and recorded many times with the Orchestra, performing a wide range of repertoire from Bach's *B Minor suite* and *Brandenburg Concerto No.5*, through Mozart's concerti for flute and Neilson's *Flute Concerto*, to the world premiere of a new concerto by Kurt Schwertsik. In 2010 he performed and recorded the late Deep Purple keyboard player Jon Lord's [To Notice Such Things](#), a six-movement suite for flute, piano and chamber orchestra. Lord played the piano on the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra recording.

Henry has also played as guest principal with many of the great British and European orchestras including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Tonhalle in Zurich and Bavarian State Opera in Munich. In November 2005 he was invited by Mariss Jansons to tour Japan and China with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and he has also performed with the John Wilson Orchestra.

Henry is also a keen chamber musician and has played in several different ensembles over the years, performing at the Edinburgh and Aldeburgh festivals and many other venues.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Marriage of Figaro, Overture*

It's one of the most widely known, best-loved works in the operatic canon – and it's not hard to understand why. [*The Marriage of Figaro*](#), Mozart's effervescent 'opera buffa', is a captivating combination of smart comedic moments, outrageous plot twists, juicy melodies and moments of magical, musical beauty.

Film fans may remember the scene in Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* – a story of some dramatic licence – where Mozart was called before Emperor Joseph II to explain himself after news reached the ruler's ears that he was writing this new work, based on what was well-known to be a banned text. The story of *The Marriage of Figaro* had originated in the imagination of French playwright and diplomat (also an inventor, musician, arms dealer, and sometime spy) [*Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais*](#) and had been banned in France by Louis XVI (Joseph II's brother-in-law) who was concerned about its fiery attack on the aristocracy.

Once the Emperor was convinced the most inflammatory aspects of the original had been expunged, Mozart's masterpiece was given the go ahead, with a libretto written by Joseph II's official librettist Lorenzo da Ponte. *The Marriage of Figaro* was premiered at [*Vienna's Burgtheater in May 1786*](#) with its composer conducting from the keyboard. While there were hecklers in the upper gallery, the appreciation of much of the audience meant five numbers were given an encore. That autumn it also made its way to Prague where it was a hit.

Interestingly, its vivacious *Overture*, with its mixture of colour, comedy and romance, is a piece of music in its own right and doesn't actually contain any of the main musical themes found in the opera itself.

Listen to the work's [*Overture*](#) played by the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart *Flute Concerto No.1*

In 1777, the 21-year-old [*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*](#) had itchy feet. The child prodigy had been in the service of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg – employer of his father Leopold – for four years, and on a very modest stipend for the number of works he was expected to produce each year. After a requested sabbatical was refused, Mozart decided to expand his horizons, quit his post and embark on a journey west towards Paris in the company of his mother, Anna Maria.

On his travels, he found himself in the German city of [*Mannheim*](#), a place of great opportunity for composers and home to an orchestra known for its innovative work. While there, he met and fell for the teenage soprano Aloysia Weber, whose younger sister Constanze he later married (a third sister, Josepha, would go on to premiere the role of Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*).

And it was also there that Mozart was introduced to wealthy Dutch East India Company surgeon – and amateur flautist – [*Ferdinand Dejean*](#), who commissioned a whole series of flute works

from the young Austrian, including three concertos and four quartets (for flute, violin, viola and cello), offering a very tempting 200 florin fee. Amid the flurry of his social life and other work, Mozart only ended up completing two of the three promised concertos (the second one being just a rearrangement of an earlier oboe concerto, much to Dejean's displeasure) and three quartets. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his fee was only partially paid.

The *Flute Concerto No.1* dates from 1778 and is noted for its elegance and clarity. It's been suggested the main theme of the lyrical adagio second movement, which is introduced by the orchestra and then passes backwards and forwards with the soloist, resembles the opening of Strauss' later *Blue Danube*.

Enjoy the [second movement](#) of Mozart's *Flute Concerto No.1*.

Igor Stravinsky *Pulcinella* Suite

It was a creative collaboration that had already dazzled (and shocked) the world with its striking modernist innovation and sheer élan. So when the great Russian impresario [Serge Diaghilev](#) approached the great Russian composer Igor Stravinsky in the wake of the First World War with an idea for a new work for his Ballet Russes, onlookers could have been forgiven for expecting more of the same. However, unlike his previous ballet scores – including, of course, the incendiary *Rite of Spring* – the new piece wasn't a bold slice of up-to-the-minute avant-garde.

Instead, [Stravinsky](#) was asked to look back two centuries to help create a work based on an early 18th-century commedia dell'arte libretto and music, thought at the time to be by the Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Pergolesi. Two years earlier in 1917, the Ballet Russes had produced *The Good-Humoured Ladies* in Rome which had a score from Vincenzo Tommasini based on music by Pergolesi's contemporary Domenico Scarlatti. Stravinsky took some persuading, but once he saw the score, he changed his mind, later describing how he 'looked...and fell in love'.

[Pulcinella](#) was premiered in Paris in May 1920 with the neo-Classical score performed by a chamber orchestra and three singers. Choreography came from the talented young Léonide Massine – who also danced the title role – while Picasso provided the set and costume designs.

The *Pulcinella Suite* was conceived (sans singers) from the ballet score in 1922 and revised at the end of the 1940s. It has eight attractive and humorous movements which recount, in music, the various ways the fair maids of Naples attempted to attract the cunning Pulcinella.

Did you know? Stravinsky made his final public performance aged 84, conducting the *Pulcinella Suite* in May 1967. He died at home in New York four years later and was buried close to Diaghilev's grave in Venice's San Michele cemetery.

Watch Stravinsky conduct the [minuetto-finale](#) from *Pulcinella* in Toronto in 1967.